improve operational efficiency and profitability of its hotels through various commercial efforts which *inter-alia* include product improvement, man-power training, marketing and reservation tie-ups, advertising etc.

[English]

District flight from Delhi to Rajkot

3052. SHRI HARIBHAI PATEL:
SHRI CHANDRESH PATEL:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal for direct flight from Delhi to Rajkot; and

(b) if so, the time by which it is likely to be started?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION AND TOURISM (SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Conversion of Automatic Exchanges in Jamnagar, Gujarat

3053. SHRI CHANDRESH PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by the Government to convert Automatic Exchanges in various Cities and Towns in Jamnagar, Gujarat; and

(b) the time by which these are likely to come into existence?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) Steps taken to convert manual exchanges into automatic exchanges are as under:

(i) Exchanges equipment have been allotted.

(ii) Purchase orders have been placed.

(iii) Project estimates have been sanctioned.

(iv) Buildings to accommodate these exchanges are being arranged.

(b) These exchanges are planned to be converted into automatic exchanges by 1994.

Assistance to Food Processing Industries in Coastal Area of Maharashtra

3054. SHRI SUDHIR SAWANT: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) the steps taken by the Government to encourage fruit processing industries for exports in coastal areas of Maharashtra;

(b) whether any assistance is provided to make packaging and bottling attractive and competitive in this industry;

(c) whether any provision of training has been made to process mango, cashew jack fruit, jamun, coconut, pineapple etc. for the youth of Kon-kon region;

(d) whether any concession and facilities have been provided for the cooperative sector engaged in the food processing industry; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) Incentives provided for 100% Export Oriented fruits and vegetable processing Units can be availed by such units located in

any part of the country including coastal areas of Maharashtra. Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has several schemes for assisting exporters. Financial assistance of Rs. 57.1 lakhs have been provided by the Ministry to 'Mahagrapes' a cooperative unit of Maharashtra., for setting up of post-harvest facilities with a view to encouraging export of grapes from Maharashtra. Export of products of some of the fruit & vegetable processing units located in coastal areas of Maharashtra are already taking place.

(b) Government has formulated schemes for assisting research in development of suitable packaging materials.

(c) The Ministry proposes to introduce a scheme for grant of financial assistance for setting up of Food Processing Training Centres in different parts of the country where training in processing locally available raw-material for manufacture of value added products could be imparted.

(d) and (e). The Ministry have formulated Plan schemes for providing financial assistance to the cooperative sector for development of food, fruit & vegetable processing facilities in rural areas, establishing or enlarging food, fruit & vegetable processing facilities and development of infrastructure for mushroom cultivation and processing. In the cooperative sector, assistance is granted in the form of loans given by National Cooperative Development Corporation at a concessional rate of interest. NCDC is also providing financial assistance to State Governments for establishment of fruit & vegetable processing units in the cooperative sector.

Integrated Steel Plant

3055. SHRI RAMCHANDRA GHANGARE: Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state:

(a) the progress made so far in the construction of the Integrated Steel Plant at Bhugaon in Wardha District; and

(b) the time by which the production work is likely to be started and its potential of employment generation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) and (b). M/s. Lloyds Steel Industries Ltd. (formerly M/s. Integrated Steel Ltd.) is implementing a project to manufacture cold rolled steel strips at Bhugaon in Wardha District. As reported by the company, civil construction has made considerable progress and orders have been placed for plant and machinery. Commercial production is expected to commence by the middle of 1993 and the project is expected to generate employment for about 80 persons.

Use of Guar Gum

3056. SHRI SHRAVAN KUMAR PATEL: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Guar Gum a substance commonly found in South Asia and used as a filler and thickener in soups, gravies and salad dressings and an ingredient is processed food as calorie free and can be effectively used for controlling blood sugar and reducing blood cholestrol; and

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to popularise and promote the use of Guar Gum as a food ingredient in processed foods?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO): (a) and (b). Guar Gum is one of the crops of semi-arid areas like Rajasthan, Madhya